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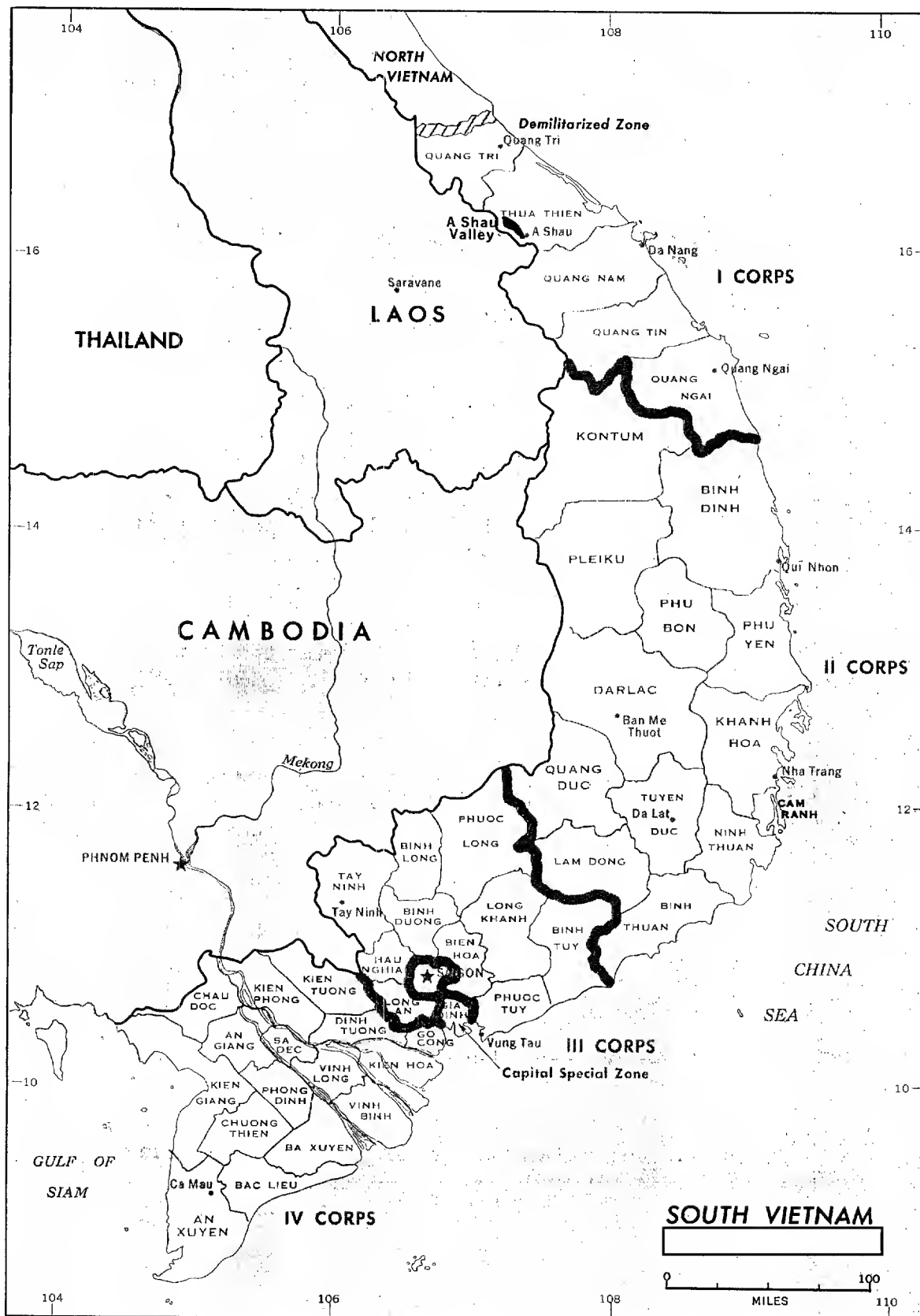
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[Vietnam: No significant new ground actions were reported in the first hours following the allies' 24-hour Tet cease-fire, which ended at 6 PM 17 February, Saigon time.

Enemy activity had increased markedly during the allied truce period, after several days of light and scattered action. Nearly 200 Communist-initiated incidents, mostly small attacks against allied military positions and patrols, resulted in 16 allied killed (eight US) against 151 Communists killed.

In the only major action of the day, up to 500 North Vietnamese attacked a US Marine fire support base in the A Chau Valley, but were beaten back with losses of 37 killed, after killing four Marines. (Map) **]**

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Western European Union: Recent British efforts to expand political consultation within the Western European Union (WEU) are threatening to develop into a major dispute with French President de Gaulle.

The French have announced that they will not take part in any meetings of the seven-nation body until further notice. The decision comes on the heels of a WEU permanent representatives' council session on 14 February, which the British proposed in an effort to promote consultation on Middle East issues. The French, who refused to attend the meeting, claimed that it could not legally be held without unanimous approval, but the other WEU members all decided to attend on grounds that consultation did not require unanimity.

Over the weekend, Paris accused WEU Secretary General Deekhoutte of overstepping his authority and canceled its participation in today's permanent representatives' council session, scheduled to lay the groundwork for a WEU assembly meeting at the end of the week.

The French cabinet, at a regularly scheduled meeting tomorrow, will discuss the WEU crisis, which many French officials claim results from new efforts to get Britain into the Common Market by the back door. It is still not certain whether De Gaulle will decide to pull his government out of the union altogether. At a WEU ministerial meeting on 6-7 February the French did not attempt to veto further political consultation among the members, possibly out of fear of being isolated. De Gaulle, however, may have felt the need to make an issue out of the recent British maneuvers in order to demonstrate French strength on the eve of President Nixon's European tour and the upcoming Franco-German summit.

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The British appear to have had some success in lining up German support for the idea of increased political cooperation between the UK and the continent. In Bonn last week, Prime Minister Wilson secured German approval of a communiqué which emphasized that European political unity was inconceivable without Britain. The Germans also reportedly told the British that they would be willing to support expanded consultation within WEU as long as it conformed to WEU rules. [REDACTED]

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Malaysia: The Communist movement in Sarawak State may be shifting its focus from parliamentary tactics to armed struggle, but major terrorism in the near future is unlikely.

On the basis of recent information, especially captured documents and prisoner interrogations, the Malaysian security officials believe that the Sarawak Communist Organization, which is largely Chinese, has decided to adopt a modified form of Mao's rural-based revolution in Sarawak and is currently attempting to consolidate and reorganize its forces. A few armed incidents in the east Malaysian state during recent months have further convinced the authorities that there has been a policy change.

Heretofore, the Sarawak Communists had emphasized infiltration of legal parties, particularly the largely Chinese Sarawak United People's Party. They also had confined their military efforts mainly to Indonesian Kalimantan, where they sought to establish a liberated area from which eventually to launch an armed struggle against Sarawak. Some of these Indonesia-based armed units have now crossed into Sarawak, and others are reportedly regrouping near the border. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Communists have only an estimated 410 armed men, of which 170 are believed to be in Sarawak.

Another aspect of the Communists' over-all policy line is proselyting among indigenous tribal groups. These efforts have apparently been more successful than the authorities had realized until very recently. The government now fears that security measures aimed at these groups might be interpreted as ethnically motivated and could trigger communal disorders.

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Problems of morale, organization, and logistics, however, appear to preclude an effective insurgent effort for some time. The strength of the Sarawak Communist Organization has declined in recent years as the result of Indonesian and Malaysian military pressure and Malaysian intelligence successes, which led to the arrest of many of its members. The organization may encounter further difficulty because the United People's Party is attempting to purge Communists from its membership.

[REDACTED]

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Surinam: Political tensions are continuing to rise and Minister-President Pengel is maneuvering to maintain his leadership.

Pengel's mishandling of last month's student-teacher strikes brought criticism from several cabinet members that pointed up serious strains between him and his advisers. The education minister refused to accept the blame for the strikes and said he would turn in his resignation "only if all of us resign." Pengel responded on 13 February by announcing that the entire cabinet had resigned. He probably hopes to use the mass resignations as a practical device to get rid of dissident ministers and to draw public attention away from continuing teacher and worker grievances.

Pengel is a "strong man" and a master at political bargaining. His chances of putting together a new government by negotiating with political leaders are probably better than if he were to call for new elections and attempt to get a fresh mandate from the people. If the present negotiations fail to produce a working majority, new elections will be held. In that case, the leftist Nationalist Republic Party, whose support for the worker demands has recently brought it increased prestige, would, for the first time, be a serious contender for representation.

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Peru-US: The Peruvian Government seems to be trying to minimize the importance of last week's fishing boat incident. The nationalistic press in Lima, meanwhile, is accusing "certain sectors" in the US of playing up the incident to worsen tensions produced by the oil company nationalization case. Peru's next move in that case is still unclear, but the recall of Peru's ambassador to the Organization of American States could be part of a plan to bring the nationalization issue before that body. [REDACTED]

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Somali Republic: Prime Minister Egal has placed national police commander Abscir on four months' leave rather than accept his resignation tendered last week when a presidential decree transferred authority over police assignments to Interior Minister Yassin. The compromise has averted a serious morale problem in the police force that would have affected its ability to maintain order during the current election campaign. The conflict between the two, however, remains basically unresolved; Egal apparently still intends to get rid of Abscir, who continues to insist that the police force must be free from political interference. [REDACTED]

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